



# News Release

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## **High breastfeeding rates lead to award for Washington WIC program**

*Washington one of five large state programs to receive this honor*

**OLYMPIA** — Washington's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program is one of five large state WIC programs to get a WIC Breastfeeding Performance Award. Our state WIC program's breastfeeding rates are among the highest in the nation — more than 85 percent of new moms on WIC in Washington breastfeed their babies.

"This is great news for Washington," says Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "We know that promoting breastfeeding helps start babies on the road to a healthier life."

The Washington WIC program was awarded more than \$415,000 to support breastfeeding, including programs at hospital birthing centers and work sites across the state. Breastfeeding saves money and is a cost effective way to fight obesity. Washington WIC promotes the American Academy of Pediatrics advice that women give only breast milk to their babies for the first six months, and continue breastfeeding through the first year.

"Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed babies and mothers who breastfeed are healthier too," says State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes, who is also a pediatrician. "We work with many dedicated partners that know the health benefits of breastfeeding for mom and baby."

The [Washington WIC program](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/default.htm) ([www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/default.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/default.htm)) is a successful public health program that improves health in lower income families. The program reaches almost half of all babies born in the state. In addition to breastfeeding services, Washington WIC provides nutrition education, healthy foods, and referrals to other important preventive health services.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a healthy dose of information.